

Message Text

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 01 LENDING 00842 130706Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 H-02 /015 W
-----031758 130713Z /14

R 130652Z JUL 77
FM AMCONSUL LENINGRAD
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3295
INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

UNCLAS LENINGRAD 0842

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: CASC, UR
SUBJ: INVALID TOUR GROUP

REF: A. LENINGRAD 778, B. STATE 151853

1. FROM ALL REPORTS AVAILABLE TO POST, IT SEEMS THE INVALID GROUP'S TOUR OF LENINGRAD ON JULY 2-3 WENT VERY WELL DESPITE RAINY WEATHER. LENINGRAD INTOURIST APPARENTLY ASSIGNED A GREAT DEAL OF PRIORITY TO THE TOUR, AND KNOWLEDGE OF, AND CONCERN ABOUT, THE TOUR WAS SHARED AT FAIRLY HIGH LEVELS; MARY MARGARET VARDIK, WHO SEEMED TO BE ONE OF THE ORGANIZERS OF THE INVALID GROUP, TOLD CONSOFF WHEN HE MET THE SHIP THAT THEY HAD SENT A TELEGRAM TO BREZHNEV AND SHOWED CONSOFF A TELEGRAM FROM INTOURIST IN REPLY STATING THAT ALL ARRANGEMENTS WOULD BE MADE. LENINGRAD INTOURIST REPORTEDLY HELD A CONFERENCE TO PLAN THE EVENT, AND THE LOCAL KOMSOMOL ORGANIZATION REPORTEDLY PROVIDED TWENTY VOLUNTEERS TO PUSH WHEELCHAIRS. A CAR WAS PROVIDED FOR ONE LARGE LADY WHOSE OVERSIZE WHEELCHAIR COULD NOT BE FITTED INTO ANY OF THE TOUR BUSES. INTOURIST CRUISE DEPARTMENT MANAGER, NINA YEGOREVA, WAS ON HAND TO SUPERVISE THE OPERATION BOTH AT THE ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE OF THE SHIP.

2. THE ONLY POSSIBLE FLAW IN THE PROGRAM FROM THE
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GROUP'S POINT OF VIEW WAS THAT INTOURIST TOLD THEM IT HAD BEEN IMPOSSIBLE TO ARRANGE TO TAKE THEM TO SATURDAY MASS AS WELL AS SUNDAY MASS. THEY DID MAKE IT TO CHURCH ON SUNDAY MORNING AND THE LOCAL PRIEST, FATHER JOSEPH PAVILONIS, LATER TOLD CONSOFF HE FELT THE SERVICE AND MEETING BETWEEN HIMSELF AND THE GROUP HAD BEEN A SUCCESS. SINCE THEY HAD PRIESTS WITH THEM, THE GROUP

WAS ABLE TO HOLD ITS OWN SATURDAY MASS ON BOARD SHIP
AND SEEMED TO ACCEPT NOT BEING ABLE TO GO TO THE
CATHOLIC CHURCH ON SATURDAY IN GOOD GRACE.

3. CONVERSATIONS WITH A FEW OF THE GROUP BEFORE THEIR
SHIP DEPARTED FOR FINLAND, INDICATED THAT THEY HAD INDEED
ENJOYED THEIR TOUR.

4. COMMENT: GIVEN THE ATTENTION THAT WAS PAID TO THIS
VISIT--SUBSEQUENT CONVERSATION WITH THE DEPUTY HEAD OF
THE DIPLOMATIC AGENCY INDICATED THEY, TOO, WERE AWARE
OF IT-- POST CONSIDERS IT MIGHT BE WELL FOR THE DEPARTMENT
TO SUGGEST TO CONGRESSMAN RODINO, WHO WAS INTERESTED
IN THE CASE, THAT HE WRITE A NOTE OF APPRECIATION
TO MR. BORIS SERGEYEVICH VANYUSHIN, GENERAL MANAGER,
VAO INTOURIST, 11 ISSAKIYEVSKIY SQUARE, HIENINGRAD,
U.S.S.R. 190000.NEUBERT

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Message Attributes

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